

REMARKS

Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-2, 4, 609, 11, 13-16, 18, 20-22 and 25-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being unpatentable over Armstrong (U.S. Patent 5,542,047). Claims 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 23 and 24 were objected to as dependent upon rejected base claims, although the Examiner has indicated that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

This application has undergone considerable prosecution, and although the Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's position, Applicant has amended the base claims to include the limitations deemed patentable by the Examiner. For example, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitation of claim 3, and claim 3 has been cancelled. Claim 8 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 10 and claim 10 has been cancelled. Claim 15 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 17 and claim 17 has been cancelled. Claim 22 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 23 and claim 23 has been cancelled. Accordingly, all claims are now in condition for allowance and a notice to this effect is hereby requested. Applicant reserves their right to pursue the subject matter of any cancelled claims in a continued application filed prior to issuance of the present case.

Conclusion:

Applicants have made a diligent effort to place the claims in condition for allowance. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require adverse action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone Applicants' Attorney at the number listed below so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

For these reasons, and in view of the above amendments, this application is now considered to be in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Date

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